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The Silver Lining

There is heartache as a news bulletin announces a natural disaster has killed millions, as traffic is stalled as the body of a loved one is driven to the cemetery, as a once happily married couple fight for custody of their children, or as a family huddles in an alley not knowing from where their next meal will come. It’s amazing how people continue living with such despair lurking in every corner. How do people possibly manage to survive after coping with agony; why not just hide away forever? I don’t foresee the ability to cease the pain of woe with my belief, but I know it gives me and others an ability to cope in a manageable way.

Years ago a best friend of mine was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. At the time I didn’t know much about the severity of the disease but have since learned a lot about it. I learned the precision that must be used when counting the carbohydrates in every food, the dire importance of keeping a decent blood sugar level, and how to treat my friend if she ever went unconscious. Most importantly, I learned that my friend's life would never be the same. I saw tension build between her parents and her siblings as they constantly nagged and reminded her to watch what she ate or alert them if she felt a little off. Since childhood, despite my friend’s younger age, she was always the bravest and most willing to tackle any problem, and she rarely let any fears slow her down. I knew her strength was superior but I never imagined how adaptable she would be to such a horrid diagnosis. She used too, and still occasionally does, have a moment of agitation with her overcautious friends and family, but she never lets her life-threatening disease put a damper on her life.

My friend may make light of her situation but I know the reality of it. I know her family and friends both dream that the stress she undergoes would miraculously be lifted from her, but though we know this will never be, we at least can take refuge in the good that came from my friend’s discovery. Her family became closer and more appreciative as they realized how much we tiptoe on the border between life and death. All who know her now understand the harsh reality of diabetes and thus more and more people are participating in fundraisers and walks to find a cure. I, for one, have truly opened my eyes and heart to those who are forced to live with any illness.

People often wish to live in a world of pure happiness. They want to only have good fortune bestowed upon them, and they thrive to never feel the cruel realities the real world offers. I believe a world like this would be very far from perfect. The balance and cycle of life is malicious and heartless at times but without living through such dire times we would never be able to appreciate the good moments. I won’t deny the feelings of hatred I have when something horrible happens to me or someone I know, and I can’t begin to describe how many times I have wished everything bad to be replaced with excitement and love. We all fall victim to weakness when we encounter our worst nightmare, but it is with my belief that despair, sorrow, and loss happen for a reason, that I am able to fight away the negativity. No, recovery does not always come as quickly as we may want it too, but just when we think we are at our breaking point the little light at the tunnel begins to shine. We begin to learn something new about ourselves that we never knew before, and we realize that an unforgettably miserable experience has actually helped pave the road for success in the future.